



**TAS/
MUS**

OPEN LETTER TO GOVERNOR PERRY

June 3, 2013

The Honorable Rick Perry
Governor of the State of Texas
1100 San Jacinto Boulevard
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Governor Perry:

On behalf of Texas parents, educators, students and businesses, we, the undersigned organizations, support reforming the STAAR testing regime and providing meaningful high school curriculum flexibility. To that end, we respectfully ask that **you sign HB 5 as soon as possible.**

Bi-Partisan, Unanimous Support: The conference committee report for HB 5 passed unanimously in both the House and in the Senate chambers. Legislators heard from their constituents and voted accordingly. HB 5 was the result of hundreds of hours of testimony, debate, drafting, and collaborating. Your office took an active role in the discussions throughout the legislative process, especially during conference committee, and has received thousands of calls in support of HB 5. Reforming the STAAR testing system has galvanized the citizens of this State more than any other issue during the regular session. Texans have voiced their overwhelming support of HB 5.

Delay is Hurting Students and Costing Money: Schools and school districts are currently spending significant financial resources and staff time planning for summer school remediation and next school year. Parents, teachers, education support staff and most importantly, current 9th and 10th grade students across Texas are confused and unsure of their high school future (graduation) while waiting to find out if STAAR test remediation and yet another set of expensive test retakes will be required. HB 5 provides immediate relief by focusing summer remediation and second 2013 STAAR administrations only on the STAAR tests still required. This expenditure of local tax payer money is unnecessary and wasteful.

STAAR Status Quo Derails High School Graduation: One hundred twenty-three thousand (123,000) Texas high school students failed at least one STAAR test last year. This year's STAAR results have not yet been publicly released, but preliminary reports from several school districts indicate that the number of students failing at least one test is likely to double; therefore, over 250,000 students are now off track to graduate from high school. Much has been said about the need to have our students ready for postsecondary education – yet, they first need to graduate from high school. The current STAAR testing regime creates only barriers to graduation without allowing time for true learning. HB 5 provides a meaningful level of relevant rigor, flexibility and choice, as well as a balanced approach to student testing while allowing for a deeper level of learning.

Texas citizens, educators and the Texas business community have been clear in their demand for reform of the current STAAR testing system. Legislators have heard their constituents and acted accordingly. We respectfully ask that you listen to Texan voters and sign HB 5 into law.

Sincerely,

Dineen J. Majcher

Dineen J. Majcher, President
Texans Advocating for Meaningful Student Assessment (TAMSA)

Mary Ann Whiteker

Mary Ann Whiteker, Legislative Chair
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